

Common **Misconceptions** About the Flu Among People Who Work in Child Care Settings

The flu isn't that serious.

The flu is contagious and can lead to severe illness even in healthy children and adults. The number of U.S. flu-related deaths is estimated to have ranged from 3,000 to 49,000 per season.

My job doesn't put me at risk for getting the flu.

The flu can spread quickly in child care settings. Children are less likely to have immunity against flu viruses and therefore are more likely to get infected. In child care settings, they are constantly in close contact with one another and their caregivers; toys and other objects are often shared; and young children may not be able to wash their hands well or cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze. These things increase the risk of flu spreading in these settings.

I don't need to get vaccinated.

Everyone 6 months of age or older should get the flu vaccine every year. Even healthy children and adults can get sick from the flu. Pregnant women, adults 65 and over, children younger than 5 years of age, and people with certain medical conditions are at greater risk of getting very sick from the flu. It is important for people who work in child care settings to get the vaccine to protect themselves, their families, and the children they care for. Infants younger than 6 months are too young to get the vaccine and are more likely to get very sick from the flu so it is especially important for their caregivers to get vaccinated.

I got the flu vaccine last year so I don't need to get vaccinated this year.

Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each year flu vaccines are updated to protect against the most common circulating viruses. Also, the protection the vaccine provides against the flu decreases over time, so it is important to get a flu vaccine every year. Flu vaccines from previous years may not protect you from getting the flu this year.

The flu vaccine doesn't work.

While protection from the flu vaccine can vary, getting vaccinated is the single best way to prevent the flu. Flu vaccines are most effective when the vaccine matches the flu viruses that are circulating in the community.

The flu vaccine can give me the flu.

The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The shot contains dead viruses, and the nasal spray contains weakened viruses. Neither form of the flu vaccine can cause flu illness. However, sometimes people may have flu-like symptoms after getting the vaccine. These symptoms can be caused by exposure to a virus other than the flu. You can also experience flu-like symptoms if you were exposed to the flu virus before you were vaccinated or in the two weeks it takes for the vaccine to take effect. Sometimes you can also be exposed to a flu virus that is not included in this season's vaccine.

The vaccine is not safe.

Hundreds of millions of people have safely received the flu vaccine over the past 50 years.

Get your flu vaccine today!

To find a location near you that offers the flu vaccine go to <http://vaccine.healthmap.org/>.

For more information about the flu and ways to protect yourself, your family, and the children you care for visit www.cdc.gov/flu or www.flu.gov.



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